

IOWA BIRD LIFE

Fall 1990 Volume 60 Number 4



IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

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FRONT COVER: Young American Bittern, Harmon Lake, Winnebago County, 24 June 1978. Photo by Bill R. Ohde.

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The IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. *Iowa Bird Life* and *I.O.U. News* are quarterly publications of the Union.

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Institutions may subscribe to *Iowa Bird Life* for \$15 per year. Individuals may join the Iowa Ornithologists' Union according to the following membership classes: Regular (\$15); Regular as spouse or minor child of another Regular member without publications (\$4 first additional family member, \$2 each additional family member); Contributing (\$15 plus any additional tax-deductible contribution to the I.O.U.); and Life (\$300 as single payment or \$75 for each of four years). Members will also receive the quarterly *I.O.U. News* and are eligible to vote and hold office in the Union. Send subscriptions, membership payments, or address changes to Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265.

INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other materials relating to birds and bird finding in Iowa should be sent to the editor. Accepted manuscripts will generally be published promptly, depending on space available, with the following absolute deadlines: 15 November for the Winter issue; 15 February for the Spring issue; 15 May for the Summer issue; and 15 July for the Fall issue. Most manuscripts will be refereed. All material should be typed double-spaced or hand printed in ink on 8 1/2 by 11 inch paper. Authors should pattern their style after a current issue of the journal. If you want more detailed guidelines or advice regarding the appropriateness of your topic for *Iowa Bird Life*, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the editor.

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UPCOMING MEETINGS OF IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION

- * 17-19 May 1991, Waterloo
- September 1991 Indianola

FIELD REPORTS

Anyone observing birds in Iowa is encouraged to report their findings on a quarterly basis to the Field Reports editors. Sample reporting and documentation forms suitable for duplication are available from the editor (send self-addressed stamped envelope to Jim Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010). An article describing the reporting process is also available.

Deadlines for receipt of field reports are as follows:

- *Winter (Dec, Jan, Feb)--3 March (W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653)
- *Spring (Mar, Apr, May)--3 June (Stephen J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)
- *Summer (Jun, Jul)--3 August (James J. Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010)
- *Fall (Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov)--3 December (Thomas H. Kent, 211 Richards St., Iowa City, IA 52246)

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

- *Deadline for receipt of reports: 15 January. For forms and instructions write: W. Ross Silcock, Box 300, Tabor, IA 51653.

IOWA BIRDLINE 319-338-9881

The birdline is a recorded summary of interesting recent bird sightings in Iowa. At the end of the report you can leave a message and report recent sightings. Be sure to give your name and phone number as well as the location of the bird and date seen. Call in as soon as possible after sighting a rare bird. Jim Fuller checks the reports daily and updates the recording on Monday, so make sure Sunday sightings are reported by Sunday night.

I.O.U. NEWS

Send items of interest for the newsletter to the editors (J. Hank and Linda Zaletel, 715 West St., Colo, IA 50056).

MATERIALS AVAILABLE

The following materials may be obtained by writing the editorial office (Iowa Bird Life, 4024 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50010):

- *Order form for back issues of *Iowa Bird Life*: send self-addressed stamped envelope.
- *Field Checklist of Iowa Birds--1987 Edition: 10 for \$1.65, 25 for \$3.50, 100 for \$11.60, postpaid. Also available at annual meetings for \$0.10 each.

REPORTING NEBRASKA BIRDS

Sightings of Nebraska birds, including those within the Nebraska portion of DeSoto N.W.R., should be reported to Loren and Babs Padelford, 1405 Little John Road, Bellevue, NE 68005. Formats for reporting and documentation are the same as for Iowa.

ADDRESS CHANGES

Please send address changes/corrections to Pam Allen, 1601 Pleasant St., West Des Moines, IA 50265.

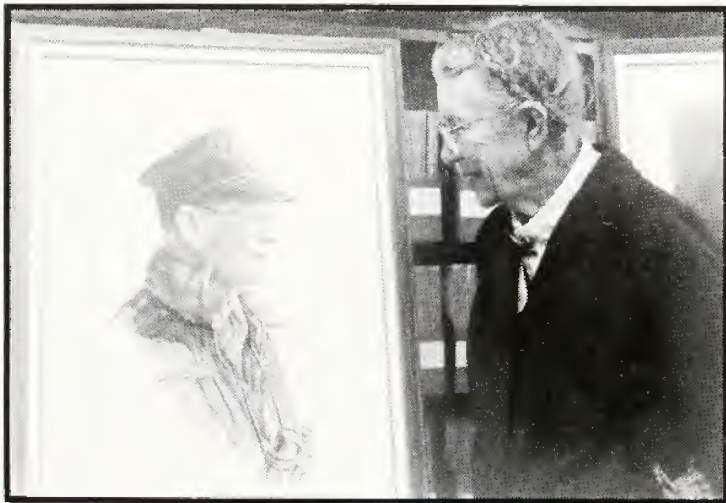
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MEET AN IOWA BIRDER: DR. GLADYS B. BLACK

ANN JOHNSON

"Just squeeze through here and we'll see if there are any eagles roosting down by the lake." The thin older lady, who could have been in where it was warm and dry on this cold, snowy December day was cajoling her younger counterpart. Somehow several pounds of soon-to-be son would just not allow me through that narrow fence opening, no matter which angle we tried, but the day was delightful in any event. My first encounter with the "grand lady of Iowa birds" was back in the early to mid-sixties when, as an adolescent at an I.O.U. spring meeting, everyone seemed old. As Uncle J.P. would introduce me to some of his contemporaries, certain people became indelibly ingrained in my mind forever. Little did I realize then that one of these "senior citizens" would become a great friend and teacher in the years ahead.

Gladys Black was born near Pleasantville and grew up loving the countryside near the beautiful Des Moines River valley. Her mother's interest in birds was contagious, and she says she knew twenty-five species in her yard by the time she was seven. After attending a one-room school near her home, she graduated from Pleasantville High School at the age of 17 and entered Mercy Hospital School of Nursing. After graduation in 1930, she went on to the University of Minnesota where she received her B.S. in Public Health, getting through three years of university work in just two years. She worked for a time as a public health nurse in Clarke County, Iowa until her marriage in 1941 to Wayne Black. World War II had begun, and new husband Wayne's service duty took the Blacks to Robbins Air Force Base, Georgia. Here Gladys found a different natural history than she had known in southern Iowa and, thanks to a neighbor who helped her with identifications of unfamiliar birds, her life list grew. She still loves to watch reactions of fellow birders as she tells tales of the Painted Buntings in her Georgia yard.



Gladys Black. Photograph by Carol Rowland.

While living in Georgia she worked for the United States Public Health Service. At the urging of her husband, she also became actively involved in community affairs and in 1953 she was named Woman of the Year in Warner Robbins, Georgia for her volunteer work. After the war ended, Gladys found time to further pursue her scientific interests and Dr. David Johnston of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia started her on the banding path. Her best catch in Georgia was a female Western Tanager, the second state record. She has continued banding in Iowa and her data have added to our knowledge of nesting and migratory movements of song birds in the Red Rock area.

When Wayne died suddenly in 1956, Gladys returned to Pleasantville to help care for her aging mother. To the benefit of all Iowans, she has never left. Georgia's loss was certainly Pleasantville's gain as Gladys became tutor and mentor to many young people involved in science projects. Under her direction the local Boy Scout troop built a bluebird trail. Other students did nesting studies and still others under her tutelage delved into the world of butterflies. Before environmental education was a real buzzword, Gladys was organizing and supervising outdoor days for Marion County students and in turn exciting those young people about their world. Her assistance continues today.

An avid reader, Gladys has continued her education over the decades and has corresponded with many environmental leaders. Her correspondence with some of the contributors to Bent's Life Histories of North American Birds helped her gather even more knowledge than the pages of books she has poured over, and her expertise extends far beyond identifications.

While always interested in natural history - she is not only knowledgeable about birds but also wild flowers and butterflies - Gladys received a sort of consciousness-raising in the early seventies. Great Blue Herons had been nesting at the foot of Red Rock Bluff since the inception of the reservoir, but suddenly there were no fledglings. A study determined that DDT and Dieldrin, washing from the crop lands into the lake, were poisoning the fish and consequently the birds. Eggshells were so thin that they would break prior to hatching. This disconcerting piece of news launched a new era in the Gladys Black story as she became a strong advocate for the environment, intimidated by no one.

Gladys Black became a household name in the summer of 1977, at least in the homes of would-be dove hunters. It was then that the Iowa Conservation Commission voted to circumvent the Legislature and by rule set a dove hunting season for the upcoming fall. Now Gladys is quick to tell anyone who will listen that she is not anti-hunting and in fact took a marksmanship course in school. The key, says Gladys, is not a ban on hunting but good game management. When the commission set a dove season which, according to Gladys' nesting studies was in conflict with "good game management", she not only took the Commission to task but teamed with friends Keith and Irene Layton of Oskaloosa and Helen Johnson of Carlisle to take the Commission to court. Two weeks before the season was to begin, a judge ruled in their favor and dove hunting was stopped before it began. The stirring of public sentiment during the six-week ordeal caused the state legislature to pass a law in the following session banning dove hunting in the state of Iowa.

I would seriously doubt that anyone in the state could counter my claim that Gladys Black has single-handedly raised the environmental consciousness of more Iowans than any other individual. Her popular series of articles on birds in the *Des Moines Register* elicited interest and awareness in a number of people across the

state. Her popular book "The Birds of Iowa", a cumulation of her newspaper articles, became a highly effective recruiting tool to attract new members to The Nature Conservancy. As Dean Roosa once said, "Seldom in the history of Iowa ornithology has one person done so much to bring the science of ornithology to so many lay readers." For this, we all owe her a debt of gratitude.

Her spunk, her knowledge, and her giving of time to make our world a better place has garnered Gladys a number of prestigious recognitions and awards. In 1978, shortly after the legislature banned dove hunting, she was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree by Simpson College in Indianola. On August 27, 1985 she was inducted into the Iowa Women's Hall of Fame. In April 1989 she was awarded the Governor's Volunteer Award. As an active member of Rolling Hills Audubon Society, what other office would be more appropriate than that of "Honorary President"? But awards are hollow if the work to be done is not carried forward.

In 1984 the debate began heating up on the use of lead shot in duck hunting. During a public hearing regarding the ban proposed by the Iowa Conservation Commission, Gladys testified in favor of the ban. Let Gladys' words, from her testimony at that hearing, not only tell you who she is but challenge you to, in your own way, protect our common interest.

"I am a cynical old woman. I am a realist and a conservationist and a firm backer of good wildlife management.

I am not a diplomat! The time for silky diplomacy is long past in this battle for steel shot, to stop the killing of 2 to 3 million ducks annually by lead poisoning.

...I have seen a lead miner die of lead poisoning. I have seen the sublethal effects in children, brain and nerve damage that is irreversible.

... A duck dying of lead poisoning is a horrible sight. This heavy metal poison affects the blood chemistry. The wings hang limp, paralysis develops and the bird slides along on its breast.

...The lead also adversely affects all the hundreds of other species using these shallow water areas from phyto- and zooplankton, insects, fishes, sandpipers, egrets, cormorants, herons, and grebes. And it also affects the endangered Bald Eagle that eats the dying duck.

...Why are you opposed to steel shot? You say you just can't hit the birds with it. You say you are crippling 20% of the birds with steel shot. That's nothing new! You have been crippling 20% with lead shot year in and year out according to Bellrose. My advice - take a course in marksmanship.

You say steel shot is terribly expensive. Poppycock! About \$5.00 more a year. You can save that on beer and soft drinks.

...To the honorable members of the House and Senate, I say to you -- we have enough problems at Red Rock, we don't want it saturated with lead. Please vote for steel shot!"

Gladys Black is many things to many people--student, educator, lobbyist, author, volunteer, environmentalist, and friend--but most of all she is a lady who loves birds. And after all is said and done, Gladys says, "If there aren't any birds in heaven, I don't want to go there!"

532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211

BIRDING THE RED ROCK AREA

ANN JOHNSON

The Des Moines River Valley takes on a different look as one moves southeast from Des Moines. No longer under the influence of the Des Moines Lobe glaciation and its gently sloping landscape, the steeply rolling hills move water rapidly into the river, leading to severe flooding problems in the south east quarter of the state. After devastating floods in 1947, money was appropriated by Congress to construct a flood-control dam across the Des Moines River. After several delays, in 1960 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began construction downstream from the old town of Red Rock in Marion County, and the gates to the dam were closed in March of 1969. Heavy snow melt and spring rains filled the permanent pool in just four days and thus began a new chapter in avian ecology for south-central Iowa.



The Red Rock area stretches from a state wildlife management area near the town of Runnells in Polk County to the Army Corps of Engineers recreation areas below the dam near Pella in Marion County. The area encompasses 47,610 acres of U.S. government lands managed by the Corps, another 25,572 acres under long-term lease to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources as a wildlife management area, and additional lands in Elk Rock State Park and Roberts Creek Park, managed by the Department of Natural Resources and Marion County Conservation Board respectively. Although by most standards this area has been under-birded, about 300 species of birds have been found here in the past 20 years. With better coverage, who knows what might be found!

As with any of Iowa's reservoirs, much of the birding is highly dependent on water levels and may change almost daily. At full storage, Red Rock Reservoir expands from the 7,000-acre permanent pool to 50,000 acres of water. This greatly affects not only the birdlife but also accessibility to birding areas. The following guide must be used with the understanding that any given area may be nearly devoid of birds or conversely may be the hot spot of the moment. All possible areas are not listed, and a good county map may lead an enterprising birder to less explored areas and tremendous results. Also not included is the vast system of unmaintained roadways on federal and state lands which, after 20 years of little to no maintenance and periodic flooding, may require a four-wheel drive vehicle and some walking. For the adventurous, the possibilities are nearly unlimited.

UPPER REFUGE AREA

(1) The tour starts at the Runnells post office on Highway 316 in southeastern Polk County (Figure 1). The Department of Natural Resources wildlife management area south of town may contain a number of water-related birds during flood years. Periodically the roads are under water, but if possible go one block south to the south edge of town, go west at the T-intersection for about two blocks, and then turn back south across the railroad tracks. In 0.2 miles the gravel road will turn right but you will continue straight ahead on the dirt road into the public hunting area which may be full of herons, cormorants, and shorebirds. If the vegetation is short, most likely in flood years, this may be a good place to look for Buff-breasted and Baird's sandpipers.

THE RESERVOIR

(4) Your first stop will be South Elk Rock State Park. From the T-intersection at Highway 14, go south 0.3 mile. Watch for the "Elk Rock State Park" sign and turn left (east) onto the park road. Immediately turn left again and you are on Old Highway 14 which has become a boat ramp. The weeds in the area are good for sparrows, the shoreline trees provide roosts for many Bald Eagles each winter, and the lake itself may produce a number of ducks, pelicans, cormorants, and gulls. Glaucous Gull has been observed from this point. Prior to the filling of the lake, the wooded bluffs of Elk Rock were home to several Cerulean Warblers and with perseverance some may still be found in this area.

(5) Return to the park road and follow the old highway south for another 0.3 mile. In wet weather you may need to return to Highway 14, turn left, and turn left (east) again in 0.3 mile opposite a brown "Historical Marker" sign. Watch for raptors along this gravel road, particularly as you get closer to the lake. As the road makes its second curve north, 2.1 miles from the highway, turn right onto a narrow gravel road headed east. Check out the wooded roadside area along the way, especially during migration, and stop at the T-intersection in approximately 0.2 mile. After the high water in the summer of 1990, this area produced Piping Plover, Snowy Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, and several other rare species in a three-week span. It has also been one of the surest places to find Buff-breasted Sandpiper in the fall. Sparrows, woodpeckers, and other passerines are also abundant through here. If you back track for 0.2 mile to the main gravel road, turn right and go another 0.3 mile to the boat ramp. In early winter, as the shallow end of the lake freezes and birds are forced closer to the dam, this is a good place for waterfowl viewing. Lighting is much better here, also, than at many other observation points.

(6) Return to Highway 14 and turn south (left). In 1.7 miles you will cross Whitebreast Creek and surrounding wetlands. The water here is usually shallow and because of its depth is one of the best locations for early spring waterfowl and possibly pelicans. If water levels are right, shorebirds, herons, and egrets may be abundant as well. Birding here can be somewhat difficult as there is barely enough shoulder to pull off the highway and traffic can be heavy. The old highway, reached by turning west on the first gravel road north of the bridge and immediately back south, can offer some respite from traffic.

(7) Follow Highway 14 south for 3.6 miles into Knoxville until you come to the second stop light where Business 92, also called W. Pleasant Street, intersects with highway 14. Turn east (left) and follow the highway as it winds through town to where the road becomes County Road T15. Starting at the Casey's store on the east edge of Knoxville, drive 4.6 miles; watch for the brown Corps sign where you will turn left onto County Road S71 and drive 2.5 miles to the entrance to the Whitebreast Recreation Area. Straight ahead for 0.4 mile takes you to the Coal Ridge boat ramp which allows unobstructed views of the lake and is one of the best places to see loons, grebes, and Oldsquaw. To scan the west side of the peninsula, turn west just before the steep incline to the Coal Ridge boat ramp and drive into the campground. Go past the entrance station and turn left in about 0.1 mile at the sign to the Coalport Boat Ramp. In 0.4 mile you will come to a boat ramp that overlooks the former beach jutting into Whitebreast Bay. Although the high water has for all practical purposes destroyed the beach for its original use, shorebirds and Snow Buntings still find it attractive. This is probably the best place to find a wandering Ruddy Turnstone or a Sanderling or two. Scope the area from the boat ramp or walk to the beach along the closed road. Try to get here early enough in the day that the

western sun is not a problem. The road through the campground follows a ridge and may produce good hawk numbers in fall. At the end of the road is Whitebreast Point picnic area, another good spot for scanning the lake. If you want to do some hiking, go back to the entrance to the Whitebreast area and turn east (left) at the stop sign. Go about 0.2 mile and watch for a parking lot on the north side of the road. This is parking for the "Stu Kuyper Trails" that wander through the timber and continue down toward the lake.

Return to the intersection with County Road T15 and turn east (left) toward the dam. Black-legged Kittiwake and Laughing, Ivory, Thayer's, Glaucous, and Lesser Black-backed gulls have all been seen around the dam in the past two years. This is also a good site for finding loons, grebes, Greater Scaup, and Oldsquaw. When the river is low, a number of terns and gulls congregate on the sand and gravel bars below the dam. Well-developed bike trails with wildlife blinds along both sides of the river can provide a great birding opportunity for cyclists and hikers.

(8) SOUTH OVERLOOK - The Visitors Center (open daily in summer, weekends rest of the year) is located at the south end of the dam and is reached in about 3.1 miles from the Whitebreast turn-off (Figure 2). Stop here for a current bird checklist and a good area map, especially the one of public hunting areas if you are interested in exploring the back roads. The recreation area around the Visitors Center is called South Overlook. In addition to scanning the lake from the deck at the center, drive back south on County Road T15 for a few hundred feet and turn right. This road leads for 0.3 mile to a picnic area at the top of the hill. Because of lighting conditions and proximity to the dam, this is one of the best spots to look for unusual divers. Large numbers of all three mergansers are common in spring. If the lake is not totally frozen in winter, this is also the best place to see the waterfowl remaining at the lake and the opportunistic Bald Eagles sitting close-by on the ice.

(9) SOUTH TAILWATER - Directly across the road from the Visitors Center is the entrance to the South Tailwater area below the dam. This is probably the most important area to bird in the Red Rock area when looking for rarities, especially gulls. Park at the end of the road at the bottom of the hill and scope the water. Open water here in the winter is usually good for a few surprises. Bald Eagles normally roost in the trees along the river each winter. In summer walk the path along the

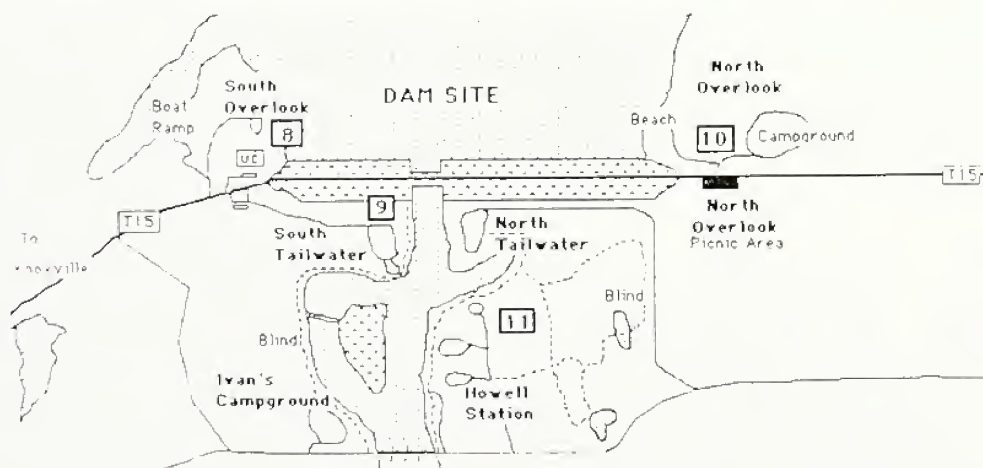


Figure 2. Birding areas near the Red Rock Dam.

hillside and listen for Carolina Wren, Cerulean Warbler, Northern Parula, and other passerines on the hillside to the south.

(10) NORTH OVERLOOK - By returning to the dam road and driving north for 1.0 mile across the dam, you will reach the North Overlook area. This recreation area encompasses both sides of County Road T15 at the north end of the dam and overlooks both the lake and the tailwaters. If you are interested in finding passerines, pull off the road into the picnic area parking lot on the east (right) side and walk the nature trail through the hardwood timber. The beach on the west side of the road, when not in use by swimmers, often has roosting gulls. If there is not a lot of glare from the water, you can also scan the central part of the lake from here.

(11) NORTH TAILWATER/HOWELL STATION - If there are birds on the water below the dam, the roads through these two recreation areas can sometimes get you closer. To get there, continue north from North Overlook on County Road T15 for 0.5 mile. The road signs get a bit confusing here as T15 both continues north and turns east (right) toward Pella. The Corps, however, has done an excellent job placing directional signs for all their recreation areas so keep watching for them. You will turn right and at the next sign in 0.5 mile turn right again. After passing through a residential area, you will see a sign in 1.1 miles directing you right to the North Tailwater area. You may turn here or continue straight ahead for another 0.8 mile to where the road ends at an old iron bridge. This bridge across the river is currently closed to all traffic but plans are underway for reconstruction to connect the bike paths. Scanning the trees downstream from the bridge usually produces a few eagles in winter. The recreation area on the right is called Howell Station and contains a campground, a boat ramp, and a picnic area. The campground road closest to the river is unlocked all winter and is a good place to observe birds in the tailwater area.

Return to where County Road T15 splits into three parts and turn right (north) to finish the loop around the lake. The ponds along this road usually have a few ducks each spring. In about 1.5 miles turn west (left) at the stop sign onto County Road G28. The Corps of Engineers operates several recreation areas along this north perimeter road and any may be worth a stop. Unfortunately most of these areas are closed at optimal birding times.

(12) The West Wallashuck area, 3.0 miles from the stop sign, houses the marina which is open year round. Turn left at the sign and drive to the parking lot at the end of the road. This is another good place to scan the lake for divers. From the marina, go back to G28 and head west again.

(13) In 2.0 miles you will come to the dam between Lake Red Rock and Roberts Creek Lake. Divers such as grebes, mergansers, and scoters are often seen from here. Gulls frequently roost on the beach and can be seen from the parking area on the dam. All of Roberts Creek Park is worth birding. The hardwood timber on the west side of the lake is good for passerines and a Cooper's Hawk nested here a few years ago. The wet areas along the east road have nesting Willow Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, and Bell's Vireo. Follow the east entrance road for 0.4 mile and then turn right. In 0.5 mile turn left at a stop sign. In another 0.5 mile the road jogs right and then turns left. At the stop sign turn left again and head due west. Follow this road for 2.0 miles until you come to the north end of Roberts Creek Lake. Depending on water and vegetation levels, this area is usually good for herons, rails, ducks, geese, and shorebirds. At this point the road bends to the north and you will continue north for 0.4 mile to the stop sign. Be sure to check the marshy areas and grasslands, good areas for sparrows, along the way. When you come to the stop sign, turn left and go

1.2 miles, then turn left again. In another 1.3 miles you will return to County Road G28.

(14) Back at G28 go back east (left) for 1.0 mile and turn right into the North Elk Rock boat ramp to scan the lake. Prairie Falcon has been observed here as have many species of gulls and waterfowl. To get to the main entrance of North Elk Rock State Park, turn left on to County G28 and go 1.3 miles west of the boat ramp. Turn left into the park. Some of the backwater areas here, particularly the one reached by bearing left at all times, can be productive for waterfowl. This is also a good place to find migrant passerines. Northern Shrike has been seen here some winters.

(15) Return to G28 and continue west for approximately one mile to the intersection with Highway 14. Turn left (south). A winter sidetrip from here may be worthwhile. In 0.3 mile turn west (right) toward the Painted Rocks development. Turn left at 0.8 mile and drive another 0.5 mile. Park beside the old Red Rock cemetery and look for Long-eared, Short-eared, and Barred owls in the evergreen trees.

Return to Highway 14, turn south (right), and go across the Mile Long Bridge. Watch to the west of the bridge for pelicans in spring and fall. It is not unusual to see an Osprey or Bald Eagle fly over as you cross. The loop is finished at the G40 turnoff to Pleasantville, 0.5 mile south of the bridge.

BALD EAGLE ROOST

If time permits, a satisfying winter side trip takes one along the Des Moines River in western Mahaska County to one of Iowa's largest Bald Eagle roosts away from the Mississippi River. Drive via Highway 14 for about 6.5 miles from the Pleasantville turn-off to the intersection with Highway 92 south of Knoxville. Turn left (east). In approximately 12 miles you will cross the Des Moines River where it is possible to see several eagles from the highway. Go approximately 2.0 miles further and turn south (right) on the second gravel road after crossing the river. At the stop sign, reached in about 0.7 mile, turn right again onto the old highway and follow it down the hill for about 2.0 miles to where the road is closed at the river. Turn left on the gravel, County Road G55, which parallels the river and follow it for several miles. More than 100 Bald Eagles roost along this road when the water remains open, providing many people with their first opportunity to hear the eagles chatter as they come in for the night. Please remember that the river frontage is private property and the eagles are susceptible to disturbance. There are several places to park along the road, and it is best to remain in your car rather than trying to approach the birds on foot.

532 120th Avenue, Norwalk, IA 50211

A HISTORY OF THE DES MOINES AUDUBON CLUB

PART I.

1923-1938

HANK ZALETEL

Last year I was asked by the Des Moines Audubon Club to give a presentation. At the meeting, they showed me eight boxes of archival material dating back to 1932 that needed a proper home. I offered to take these materials to the Special Collections at Iowa State University Library where they would be inventoried, cataloged, and made available for public use.

As I sorted through the files in these boxes, I soon realized the importance of the material. In the book *Iowa Birds*, the authors state that "there is no statewide organization of bird clubs in Iowa as there are in other states... Thus, information on the history of Iowa bird clubs is difficult to find." With this collection of material as a source of information, I decided to write a history of the Des Moines club. The club was founded in 1923 making it the second oldest organized bird club in the state. Secondly, it has operated continuously for the last 67 years, an enviable record for any organization.

It soon became evident that with the amount of material I had assembled it would be necessary to divide the article into three parts: Part 1, covering the beginning years 1923-1938; Part 2 covering the middle years 1939-1953; and Part 3 the years from 1954 to the club's fiftieth anniversary in 1973.

On 15 June 1923 a group of people interested in birds met at the home Mr. and Mrs. Henry Frankel to discuss the organization of a bird club. Those present included the Frankels, Dr. and Mrs. Luther Ross of Drake University, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Palas, Mr. Malone, a student at Drake, and H.T. Roland. At the second meeting of this group, a constitution was adopted, Arthur Palas was elected President, and a field trip was planned. After some discussion, it was decided that the club's purpose would be "to encourage the protection of birds, their nests, and haunts."

Arthur Palas had graduated from Drake University in 1907 and received his law degree from the University of Texas. He was county attorney in Clayton County before he moved to Des Moines in 1921 when he began a private practice. During his term of office, 1923-25, he enlisted many new members and began a series of field trips, especially to Ashworth Park.

Meetings alternated between members' homes and public places such as the public library, state historical building, and Drake University. The club held open meetings three times a year when the public was invited to attend. Prospective members were nominated and approved at the meetings following the open sessions. The minutes do not record anyone being denied membership. By the end of the second year, membership had grown from 30 to 80 members.



Arthur Palas

The first Christmas Bird Count was held on 26 December, 1923. Five members: Olivia McCabe, Mrs. J.E. Stewart, Arthur Palas, Mrs. Toni Wendelburg, and Phil DuMont, took part. Areas covered included a stretch of Indianola Road and the woods

along the Raccoon River, Walnut Creek, and the Des Moines River north of Des Moines. Twenty-seven species and 1,297 individuals were counted. This Christmas count, one of the state's oldest, has been held continuously for the last 66 years.

Arthur Allen (Professor of Ornithology at Cornell University and bird popularizer), writing in *Bird Lore* in 1927, stated that from earliest time sanctuaries had existed in order that "the hunted could take refuge without fear of pursuit." Writing of past hunting excesses, he noted that even today "all hunted creatures should have places of safety into which they can flee to ward off complete annihilation."

Further, a sanctuary provides for the "naturalist...a place where he can study wild life in a natural, undisturbed state; for the sportsman...a reservoir of game; and for the economist, a natural resource that may rebound for the common good. "The idea, however, for taking productive land out of cultivation for a refuge, had not gained widespread acceptance. Allen noted, however, that "when the sanctuary idea is combined with other civic improvements, such as reforestation and public recreation, and makes good use of lands that have ceased to be of real agricultural value, there can be little question that the purchase of private lands by government agencies from public funds is entirely legitimate."

By 1926, the city of Des Moines had acquired by gift and purchase more than 200 acres of land around its waterworks and land bordering the Raccoon River. Des Moines Audubon members and especially Mrs. J.E. Stewart (President 1925-29) were able to convince Mayor Charles Sing Denman and Arie den Boer of the Water Works to keep this area as a wildlife sanctuary. Eight acres were planted with 800 native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers. A small pond was enclosed with a cat-proof fence, and the river was posted as a wildlife refuge. To be able to fulfill its stated purpose of 'protecting birds, their nests and haunts' with this sanctuary and to do this all within three years of their organization was quite an achievement.

Des Moines Audubon's second president, Mrs. J. E. Stewart, had her interest in birds first piqued by those coming to her feeder. According to Phil DuMont, she then became a serious bird student and then, a very active member of the Audubon club. He stated that she was a very good organizer with a pleasing personality. This is witnessed by the fact that she was President of the club for five years.

Members of the Des Moines Audubon Club were instrumental in the founding of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union (I.O.U.). In 1923, Mrs. Toni Wendelburg recalled that she and the Palases drove to Ames with other interested persons and helped form the organization.

At the 1926 I.O.U. meeting in Atlantic, Des Moines members Arthur Palas and Kenneth Nelson were elected President and Secretary respectively. Phil DuMont stated that in the beginning of these clubs, the I.O.U. and the Des Moines Audubon were almost synonymous because the officers and board members were interchangeable.

The fifth annual I.O.U. meeting was hosted by the Des Moines Audubon on 30 April-1 May 1927. Registration took place at the Hotel Savery. The afternoon programs were held at the Public Library with the evening banquet at the Grant Club. Bird whistling was provided by John Woodmansee, and the banquet speaker was William Hornaday, Director of the New York Zoological Garden. The following Des Moines members were elected to office: Arthur Palas, President; Kenneth Nelson, Secretary; and Mrs. J.E. Stewart, Board of Directors.

In December, 1929, Des Moines was the site of the meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). The Wilson Ornithological Club held its 16th national meeting in Des Moines in conjunction with the AAAS

meeting. Arthur Palas was local chairman for the Wilson Club. He persuaded many Des Moines members to join the Wilson Club so that they could attend any or all of the AAAS sessions.

On 27 December, Mrs. J.E. Stewart opened the meeting and welcomed the Wilson Club members to Des Moines. Arthur Palas spoke to the group on "Making Bird Sanctuaries of Public Grounds" using lantern slides taken at Water Works Park. In the Art Gallery of the Public Library, where the W.O.C. meetings were held, original drawings, etchings, and paintings of birds by noted artists were on exhibit, and in the assembly-room, the library staff displayed some of their notable bird books.

On the last day of the meeting, receptions for the AAAS members and speakers were held, with the Frankels serving as the hosts for the Des Moines Audubon. Many of the prominent scientists from the AAAS meeting attended the Frankel reception.

Meetings were well attended, to the satisfaction of the officers and committees, by many local people. Of the 202 persons registered, 106 were from Des Moines, the other 96 from Iowa and 20 other states.

The *Wilson Bulletin* stated that the "meeting was made especially enjoyable through the hospitality of the Des Moines Audubon Society and the Iowa Ornithologist Union. In many respects this meeting was the most interesting and successful one in the history of the organization."

Margo Frankel and her husband Henry, a former president and board chairman of Younkers, were founding members of the Des Moines Audubon Club. In 1927, she was appointed to the State Board of Conservation by Governor John Hammill. She was the board's chairman in 1932-1933. She was the only board member appointed to the reorganized State Conservation Commission in 1934 and was its chair in 1935-1936. She resigned in 1937. While on the Commission, she opposed hunting seasons on the Bobwhite and Mourning Dove. She also sought to have the Highway Commission reduce its mowing along primary highways in order to conserve nesting habitat.

Her concern about roadside mowing extended to other Audubon members. A discussion at the August, 1933 Audubon executive board meeting noted that "many nests and much food are destroyed in this way. More harm is done in one season, than four years of growth can replace. State law requires that 'all weeds along state highways be cut by July 15.' We must have this modified or restricted."

As an Audubon member, Margo Frankel was always one of the first members to answer calls for bird talks to schools and service organizations. Armed with books and feeders, she encouraged the planting of native trees and shrubs as bird habitat with her own grounds serving as a model.

During the years 1930-1933, Mrs. Anna Palas served as President. It was in November of 1931 that the club sponsored the publication of *The Birds of Polk County, Iowa*. It was written by Philip DuMont using bird records and observations of Des Moines Audubon members. Historical comparisons of bird populations, early and late arrivals and locations of favorite birding sites were discussed in the 64-page book.

The review in *Iowa Bird Life* stated that the book is a "valuable addition to the lengthening list of bird catalogs of Iowa counties." "...largely sponsored by the active Des Moines Audubon Society, has made a very substantial contribution to the



Anna Palas

ornithology of the county. It is quite fitting that the Des Moines Audubon Society should publish this list of its county birds, and we hope that it will be able to give the booklet the distribution among bird people that it so well deserves."

The tenth annual meeting of the I.O.U. was held 13-14 May 1932 in Des Moines and was sponsored by the Des Moines Audubon. The meeting opened at 9:45 a.m. Friday morning in the Venetian Room of the Hotel Savery. Arthur J. Palas introduced I.O.U. President Dr. F.L. Roberts. Mrs. O.E. Gilcrest of the Des Moines club welcomed those in attendance.

A series of programs were presented during the day including one given by Aldo Leopold on "The Role of the Ornithologist in the Iowa Game Program." That evening the banquet was held at Younkers Tea Room with Anna Palas presiding. A group of songs, ably led by Mabel Moss Madden, were sung. After much discussion, the Goldfinch was nominated to be Iowa's state bird. Saturday morning field trips left for Brenton Slough, Fisher Lake, Crocker Woods, Avon Lake, and Water Works Park.

From 1933-1935, Howard L. Bump served as president. He and his predecessors annually set up a booth at the State Fair. It consisted of bird skins, mounts, pictures, literature, and habitat displays of shrubs, grasses, and the like. Their goal was the furtherance of wildlife protection, attracting new members in the Des Moines area, and the establishment of similar organizations in other towns.

In October, 1932 the Midwest Horticulture Exhibit in Marshalltown requested that the club set up a display on bird sanctuaries. Arie den Boer, chairman of the Exhibit Committee, reported at the November meeting that the club had captured second place and a \$10.00 prize. He commented that the club took only second place because it had "too many weeds in their display to be accorded first place."

The minutes of the 22 May 1933 meeting stated that "Miss Kate La Mar, our retiring treasurer, had been elected Secretary Treasurer of the I.O.U. (the week before at Fairfield). She thanked Miss La Mar for her efficient work, and the amount left in the treasury."

The following week, Mrs. Margo Frankel was presented a bronze medal by the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society for her services in improving the Iowa state park system. The medal awarded to Mrs. Frankel by the society was one of several given each year to outstanding leaders in park improvement work throughout the nation.

Dr. George Hendrickson of Ames reported to the club at the January, 1934 meeting that Dr. Arthur Allen would speak in Ames on March 7th. It was estimated that he could be persuaded to speak in Des Moines for \$200.00, a prohibitive cost. A committee was formed to study the feasibility of having him speak. The committee decided that he would be invited if costs could be contained. Tickets would cost 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for students. News releases would be sent to newspapers within a 75 mile area. Dr. Allen's lecture was a huge success with an attendance of more than 200. Dr. Allen's fee was \$100.00. After expenses were paid, a balance of \$36.92 remained.

At the September, 1934 meeting, Phil DuMont reported on the progress of the Starling coming to central Iowa.

Members of the club were saddened in November, 1934 to hear that Anna Palas, founding member and past president, had died of malaria contracted during a pleasure trip to Florida the previous week. Born in Osage in 1885, she was educated in the Des Moines schools. She entered Drake University and graduated in 1907. She then became a member of the university staff teaching languages. She married in 1909 and

in 1911 moved with Mr. Palas to Elkader where they lived until 1921 when they returned to Des Moines.

Writing in *Iowa Bird Life* in 1935, Kate La Mar spoke of Logan Bennett's talk "Waterfowl Management in the Prairie Region" given to the joint I.O.U. and Nebraska Ornithologists' Union meeting in Sioux City in May, 1935. He spoke of game birds and shorebirds being exterminated not by hunters but by lack of nesting cover and food supply. By fencing wetlands 14-28 feet from the shoreline, he stated that there would be sufficient cover for the birds to nest and raise their young.

Des Moines Audubon members, eager to participate in such a project, discussed the possibility of fencing Brenton Slough, located one mile south of Granger in Polk County. After conferring with the owner Clyde Brenton, twenty acres were chosen for the project. The fencing was erected by Conservation Commission employees under the direction of Logan Bennett with the Des Moines Audubon spending \$100.00 for all the fencing materials. The club now had a second sanctuary. After the establishment of the Brenton Sanctuary, Kate La Mar continued interest in the slough by conducting a 3-year study of the area's flora and fauna.

Mrs. W. G. DuMont served as president during the 1935-1936 year. She was the mother of Philip DuMont and an avid horticulturist. After her husband's death, she supported her family with her nursery business. During 1936, Arthur Palas founding member and the club's only field trip leader moved to Postville. As Olivia McCabe wrote "we were sorry to lose him. He had not only made beginners eager to belong to our society, but he 'knew birds.' He made us feel that bird study was worthwhile and pointed out, with kindness and patience, how we might be wrong! He never turned 'an eye of dreadful scorn' on us, if we saw a wren in January!"

Other charter members, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Stewart and Dr. and Mrs. Luther Ross moved in 1936. Dr. Luther Ross was a Professor of Biology at Drake University. Each year he taught a class in ornithology and through it recruited many new members for the club. Phil DuMont characterized Dr. Ross as having an engaging personality and an interest in birds that was quite contagious. Phil stated that as an assistant to Dr. Ross, he was paid to lead class field trips until his graduation in 1926. Upon hearing of the upcoming departure of Dr. Ross, the Des Moines Club had a special ceremony at his last meeting in which they presented him with a silver watchfob in the shape of a bird.

When these long-time members left, active newcomers arrived to fill their shoes. Mrs. Ross



Janetta DuMont



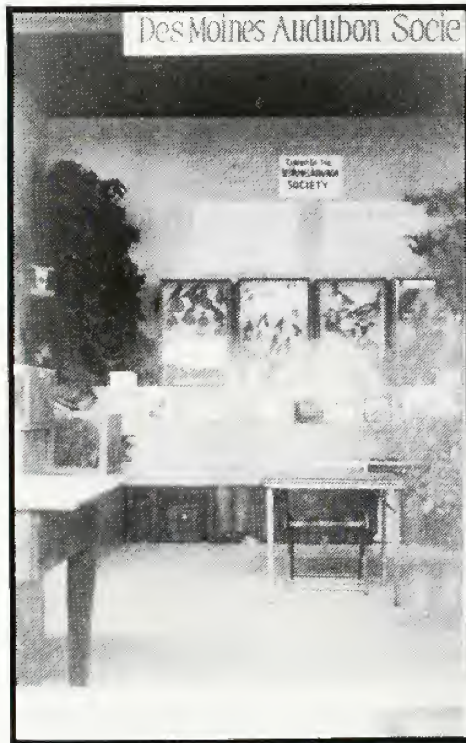
Kate La Mar

Thornburg and Gladys Haskell joined at this time.

Kate La Mar (President 1936-1938) was raised in Missouri and graduated from Warrensburg (MO) State Teachers College. She taught in the Des Moines school system for 18 years and served as Principal at Clarkson School. She was a member of the Des Moines Audubon Club for more than twenty years serving as Treasurer, President, and a number of committee chairs. In 1936, she attended the Audubon Nature Camp at Muscongus Bay, Maine as a representative of the Des Moines Audubon and the Des Moines Garden Club. From 1933 to 1940 she served as Secretary-Treasurer of the I.O.U. She married Noah Blosser in June, 1940 and moved to Patterson, Iowa. She died suddenly in February, 1944 from a lung ailment.

This concludes part I. The next segment, 1939-1953, will look at the acquisition of a new sanctuary, incorporation of the club, club publications, its twenty-fifth anniversary, and some of its members including Toni Wendelburg and Olivia McCabe.

715 West Street, Colo, IA 50056



Des Moines Audubon Club exhibit at Iowa State Fair

FIELD REPORTS-SUMMER 1990

JAMES J. DINSMORE

WEATHER

The weather this summer was a stark contrast to the past two summers. June can be described in a word-wet. The statewide rainfall average for the month was 7.85 inches, the fourth wettest June (on average the wettest month) on record and the wettest since 1967. Through June, precipitation for Iowa averaged 21.85 inches, 6 inches above average and more than we received in all of 1989. East-central Iowa received the most rain, 10.9 inches. Only Council Bluffs had less than normal rainfall through the end of June. Although much of the rain came in a series of daily storms with 1-3 inches, some places also



got downpours like Dallas County with a 7-inch drenching on 15 June. Much of the rain fell from 16-20 June and led to widespread flooding, both from rivers overflowing their banks and from overloaded tile systems that were unable to remove water from saturated fields. At one point, tens of thousands of acres were under water, some of it remaining on fields for weeks.

July continued the wet trend, and it was the wettest January-July ever recorded in Iowa with a statewide average of 28.6 inches. Much of the state received steady but not excessively heavy rainfall in mid July while both north-central and southwestern Iowa received especially heavy rain in late July. Almost 9 inches fell at Randolph in southwestern Iowa on 26 July, and many other areas received 4 inches or more on 26-27 July, leading to heavy runoff, standing water in the fields, and flooded lowlands in valleys downstream.

Shorebird habitat was abundant this year. On the downside, the widespread flooding in the height of the nesting season probably flooded many nests. I wonder what effect it had on lowland ground-nesting species like Bobolinks and Wild Turkeys. Temperatures were moderate and in general they seemed a bit lower than average. There were a few 90 degree days in early July and a peak of 104 in Council Bluffs on 2 July but on most days highs were in the 70s and 80s, a change from the dry blistering heat of the past two years.

GENERAL TRENDS

As I have done in past years, I prefer to emphasize trends among nesting species. Some of the better finds among nesting species were the presence of two Double-crested Cormorant colonies, increased nesting success of Bald Eagles, a brood of Greater Prairie-Chicken near a recent release site, a successful Piping Plover nest, two Chuck-wills-widow nests, and evidence of nesting by Green-winged Teal, Cooper's Hawk, Virginia Rail, Worm-eating Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler.

In the good-news department were the numerous reports of Upland Sandpipers, Carolina Wrens, and Loggerhead Shrikes along with increased numbers of several grassland species like Eastern and Western meadowlark and Northern Harrier. Yellow-headed Blackbirds responded rapidly to the improved water conditions and were found in several places they normally don't inhabit. I suspect that waterfowl and perhaps species like phalaropes did likewise although they received little attention. Other species that seemed to be doing well included Gray Partridge in southwestern Iowa,

House Finches everywhere, and Great Blue Herons. Among non-breeders, there were numerous reports of Caspian Terns, Ring-billed Gulls, and American White Pelicans indicating that they are regular in much of Iowa during summer.

On the other hand, there were few reports of Veery, Wood Thrush, or White-eyed Vireo, and some suggestions by reporters that at least the first two are really missing from areas they formerly inhabited. Are some of these neotropical migrants really in trouble? Perhaps we should try to carefully monitor numbers of those species or others like Cerulean Warbler in Iowa to see what is happening. Likewise, the lack of reports of Least Tern in western Iowa and Great-tailed Grackle is puzzling.

It was encouraging to see some indication that the Conservation Reserve Program might have an effect on grassland bird populations. With the reflooding of Iowa's wetlands and the numerous flooded fields, I was surprised at how few reports mentioned marsh species like rails, bitterns, and Common Moorhen. Were these habitats just not covered this year or were those birds really absent? Also, despite all of the flooded-field habitat available this year, relatively few shorebirds were reported. I suspect that since so much habitat was available, shorebird concentrations were hard to find.

UNUSUAL SIGHTINGS

As for the past several years, this was a fairly dull summer. The only Accidental species reported were Mississippi Kite, Long-billed Curlew, and Green-tailed Towhee while the only Casual species was Bewick's Wren. There were a number of other birds that were unusual for the season including Oldsquaw, Common Goldeneye, Bufflehead, Sandhill Crane, Northern Shrike, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Clay-colored Sparrow, White-throated Sparrow, Purple Finch, and Red Crossbill.

SPECIES DATA

* = documented record, [] = record date

Common Loon: More reports than usual; 2 at Black Hawk L. in June (M. Mahn fide JJD), and singles on Saylorville Res. on 18 Jun (Scott Rolfes fide SJD), Clear L. on 4 Jul (J. Wahl fide JLH), Dale Maffitt Res., Polk Co. in late June and early July (RCe, AJ, SJS), and in Fremont Co. on 15, 17 Jul (DLR).

Pied-billed Grebe: A brood was at Lakin Sl., Guthrie Co. on 11 Jul (AJ).

Eared Grebe: A pair in NW Palo Alto Co. in early June (P. Delphey fide JJD) and 3 on Little Wall L. on 6 Jun (BEh) both were courting. 1 was at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MCK).

Western Grebe: Singles were at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MCK), Clear L. on 8 Jul (J. Wahl fide JLH), and Lizard L., Pocahontas Co. on 12 Jul ((BEh).

American White Pelican: 1-20 were reported from Harrison, Johnson, Monona, Palo Alto, Polk, and Warren counties. 2 at Elk R., Clinton Co. on 9 Jun (PCP) were east of the usual range while 50 at Clear L. on 20 Jul (JLH) and 77 at Riverton W.A. on 25 Jul (SJD) were the only large groups reported.

Double-crested Cormorant: Few reports. Singles were at L. Manawa on 29 Jun and 5 Jul (BP a, LP a) and Zirbel Sl., Cerro Gordo Co. on 30 Jun (JLW). There were 40 birds and 5 nests at Coralville Res. on 13 Jul (THK) and 250+ nests n. of Clinton (PCP), the largest Iowa colony reported in recent years.

American Bittern: All reports were from Iowa: 2 at Anderson L. in mid June (B. Geisler fide JJD), 1 at Cooper's M., Story Co. on 22 Jun, and 2 at Larson M., Story Co. on 2 Jul (both S. Lekwa fide HZ).

Least Bittern: Singles at Big Wall L. on 4 Jun (BPr, MPr), Zirbel Sl. on 24 Jun, 21 Jul (JLH), and Sunset P., Monona Co. on 15 Jul (BP a, LP a) were the only reports.

Great Blue Heron: Several colonies were noted: 5 nests w. of Liscomb (MPr), 4 nests at Red Rock Res. (Iowa DNR), at least 36 nests at Saylorville Dam, and 30+ nests at Otter Cr. M. (Iowa DNR). 55 birds at Riverton W.A. on 20 Jul (TB) was the only big post-breeding group noted.

- Great Egret:** There were the usual reports of 1-6 almost statewide. 14 at Coralville Res. on 22 Jul (THK) and 19 at Riverton W. A. on 20, 25 Jul (TB, SJD) were the only post-breeding concentrations noted.
- Snowy Egret:** An adult at Riverton W.A. on 25 Jul (SJD) was the only report.
- Little Blue Heron:** Both reports are from Riverton W.A.: 2 ad. and 2 imm. on 20 Jul (TB) and 1 ad. and 5 imm. on 25 Jul (SJD).
- Cattle Egret:** There were 12 reports from 9 counties (Fremont, Jefferson, Johnson, Kossuth, Marion, Polk, Scott, Story, and Warren), the most since 1984: Other than 10 n. of Indianola on 27 Jun (AJ), 12 at Moeckly Prairie, Polk Co. on 14 Jul (BE), and 21 at Coralville Res. on 4 Jul (THK), all were of 1-6 birds.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron:** 1-9 were reported from Cerro Gordo, Pocahontas, Polk, Story, and Wright counties but no one mentioned nesting colonies.
- Yellow-crowned Night-Heron:** An imm. at Riverton W.A. on 20 Jul (TB) was the only report.
- Snow Goose:** 1-3 were reported at Union Slough N.W.R. (MCK), IPL Ponds (TB, BP, LPa, JF), and Riverton W.A. (TB).
- Canada Goose:** DNR reports indicated poor nesting success in N Iowa this year, probably due to the low water conditions this spring. Geese were doing well along the Mississippi R. and at several C and S Iowa locations.
- Green-winged Teal:** A brood was at Union Slough N.W.R. on 25 Jul (MCK) and 14 males were at Virgin L., Palo Alto Co. on 11 Jun (JJD); 1-3 were at Coralville Res. (THK), Colo Ponds (HZ), and Cardinal M. (DC).
- Northern Pintail:** Pairs were seen at two wetlands in Emmet Co (P. Delphey fide JJD).
- Blue-winged Teal:** Broods were reported from 3 sites near Colo (HZ), somewhat out of its usual nesting range.
- Northern Shoveler:** 3 broods were at Union Slough N.W.R. on 25 Jul (MCK), and a pair was Colo Ponds on 6 Jun (HZ).
- Gadwall:** A pair at Dan Green Sl. on 8 Jun (DK), 3 males at Virgin L. on 11 Jun (JJD), and 3 pairs at Union Slough N.W.R. until 22 Jul (MCK) were the only reports.
- Canvasback:** A male was seen near Webster City on 11 Jun (DK).
- Redhead:** 1 pair at Dunbar Sl., Greene Co. on 10 Jun (JJD), 2 pairs at Virgin L. on 11 Jun (JJD), and 8 pairs at Union Slough N.W.R. until 8 Jul (MCK) were the only reports.
- Ring-necked Duck:** A male at Goose L., Kossuth Co. on 18 Jun (MCK) and 1 at IPL Ponds on 22 Jul (TB, BP, LPa) were the only reports.
- Lesser Scaup:** 1 at Davenport on 2 Jun (PCP), a male at Silver L., Palo Alto Co. on 11 Jun (JJD), and a female at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MCK) were the only reports.
- Oldsquaw:** A female at Rice L. on 29 Jul (SJD, details) was the same bird seen there this May and is the first summer report from Iowa.
- Common Goldeneye:** Two reports: a male at Union Slough N.W.R. until 13 Jun (MCK) and a female at Cardinal M. on 4, 18, 20 Jun (DC, MJH) (the same bird was there this May). These are the 3rd and 4th recent summer records.
- Bufflehead:** A male at W. Lake Okoboji until 10 Jun (DK) appeared to be injured; it is the 4th recent summer record.
- Hooded Merganser:** Besides 5 broods seen at Union Slough N.W.R. on 25 Jul (MCK), a female at PJ Lake, Mills Co. on 3 Jun (DLR) was the only report.
- Ruddy Duck:** There were more reports than usual including broods at Mallard M., Cerro Gordo Co. on 29 Jul (JLW) and at Cardinal M. on 30 Jul (DC); others were reported in Cerro Gordo, Greene, Kossuth, and Pottawattamie counties.
- Turkey Vulture:** 21 were at Littlefield R.A., Audubon Co. on 7 Jul (SJS).
- Osprey:** Singles were reported from 6 locations: around Coralville Res. several times in June and July (JF, THK), at Saylorville Res. in July (S. Rolles fide SJD), in NW Cerro Gordo Co. on 19, 20 Jul (R. Goranson fide JLW), n. of Algona in early July (R. Schmidt fide MCK), at Red Rock Res. on 24 Jul (AJ), and at Cardinal M. on 30 Jul (DC). 2 were at Saylorville Res. on 17 Jul (BE).
- Mississippi Kite:** A report from Johnson Co. will be referred to the Records Committee.
- Bald Eagle:** 7 nests produced 13 young, the most in recent years (JLH). A nest in Jackson Co. was blown down but one young was saved. An adult in NE Madison Co. on 21 Jul (EIA, EuA) was the only report away from nesting areas.
- Northern Harrier:** 1-3 were reported in Clinton, Jones, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Van Buren, and Wright counties in June but no one mentioned nesting. Two late July reports probably were early migrants.

- Cooper's Hawk:** A young was seen in a nest at Woodland Mounds, Warren Co. on 3 Jun (JSi), and an adult was seen in Sioux Co. on 21 Jun (BPr, MPr). I also received a late report of an active nest in Decorah in April (Bruce Ehresman fide JJD).
- Broad-winged Hawk:** An adult carrying food at Waubonsie S.P. on 22 Jul (TB, BPa, LPa) is suggestive of nesting.
- Swainson's Hawk:** More reports than usual including 2 nests in Cerro Gordo Co. (CN), and 1 or 2 birds in Black Hawk, Cerro Gordo (2 other sites), Hamilton, Hardin, Kossuth (2 sites), Lyon, and Montgomery counties.
- Merlin:** 1 seen in Chickasaw Co. on 3 Jun (RCe*) was late but almost duplicates the date of a similar N Iowa sighting last year.
- Peregrine Falcon:** An adult at the IPL Ponds on 4 Jul probably was a bird released in Omaha last year (TB, BPa, LPa). Iowa's introduction program continued with 13 young birds released in Cedar Rapids in July. By month's end, 11 were still alive and doing well. In addition, a 1-year-old bird that was found in Cedar Rapids was probably one of the birds released last year.
- Gray Partridge:** They were "nearly everywhere" in SW Iowa including broods in Mills and Page counties (BLW).
- Ruffed Grouse:** A few drumming males were found in Stephens S.F. in SC Iowa this spring. Birds were released there several years ago (Iowa DNR).
- Greater Prairie-Chicken:** A brood was seen near the Ringgold W.A. in July (Iowa DNR).
- Virginia Rail:** A nest was found near Thornton, Cerro Gordo Co. (L. Hemesath fide JJD). 2 birds at Zirbel Sl. on 6 Jul (JLW) and 1 at Big Wall L. on 29 Jul (SJD) were the only other reports.
- Sora:** Nests were found on 3 wetlands in Cerro Gordo Co. (L. Hemesath fide JJD). 3 birds at Swan L., Johnson Co. on 2 Jun and 1 there on 14, 28 Jul (THK) were the first Kent has seen there.
- Common Moorhen:** 1 at Big Wall L. on 4 Jun and 29 Jul (BPr, MPr, SJD) was the only report.
- American Coot:** 2 broods at Lakin Sl., Guthrie Co. on 11 Jul (AJ) is somewhat out of their usual range.
- Sandhill Crane:** 1 near Princeton on 11 Jun (AB), 1 at Riverton W.A. on 12 Jun (CP), and 3 in the Green Island/Goose L. area, Clinton Co. periodically in June and July (Bob Sheets fide JJD) add to the spread of this species in Iowa. I received a late report of 2 e. of Knoxville from Jun-Aug 1989 (fide Gladys Black).
- Lesser Golden-Plover:** 1 at Dan Green Sl. on 11 Jun (JJD, details) was the only report.
- Semipalmated Plover:** 1 at Colo Ponds on 16 Jul (HZ) was the first.
- Piping Plover:** A pair at IPL Ponds had 3 young on 6-25 Jul (BPa, LPa, et al.), the first successful nesting there since 1987 and there were 2 adults and 2 young at the IPS Ponds at Sioux City on 4 Jul (Bill Huser fide JJD). 1 was at Red Rock Res. on 17-18 Jul (TSc*, AJ).
- American Avocet:** 7 were at the IPL Ponds on 16 Jul (TB, BPa, LPa), and 3-10 were at Red Rock Res. on 16-22 Jul (AJ).
- Greater Yellowlegs:** 1 on 13 Jul in Johnson Co. (THK) was the first.
- Lesser Yellowlegs:** 7 at Coralville Res (THK) and 4 at the IPL Ponds (BPa, LPa), both on 4 Jul, were the earliest reports.
- Solitary Sandpiper:** 1 e. of Jefferson on 1 Jul (JJD) and 1 at Colo Ponds on 3 Jul (HZ) were the first.
- Willet:** 7 at IPL Ponds on 4 Jul (BPa, LPa) and 2 at Red Rock Res. on 21 Jul (AJ) were the only reports.
- Spotted Sandpiper:** A nest was found in NW Cerro Gordo Co. (L. Hemesath fide JJD) in June.
- Upland Sandpiper:** I had an encouraging number of reports including Adams, Dallas, Dickinson (6 nests!), Fremont, Harrison (nest), Johnson, Kossuth (2 sites), Lyon, Monona, Montgomery, Muscatine, Polk, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, and Van Buren counties.
- Long-billed Curlew:** 1 seen briefly in W Iowa will be referred to the Records Committee.
- Sanderling:** Singles were at the IPL Ponds on 15, 25 Jul (TB, SJD) and at Saylorville Res. on 26 Jul (SJD).
- Semipalmated Sandpiper:** 1 at Colo Ponds on 7 Jun (HZ) was the last spring bird while the first fall migrant was 1 in Warren Co. on 14 Jul (AJ).
- Western Sandpiper:** A juvenile at the IPL Ponds on 25 Jul (SJD, details) was the only report.
- Least Sandpiper:** 3 at Lylah's M., Howard Co. (MJH) and 8 at the IPL Ponds (BPa, LPa), both on 4 Jul were the first fall birds. 40 at Coralville Res. on 13 Jul (THK) was the most reported.
- White-rumped Sandpiper:** 25 at Coralville Res. (THK) and 1 at Colo Ponds (HZ), both on 6 Jun [ties 3rd latest], were the last spring birds.

Pectoral Sandpiper: 3 on 4 Jul (ties 2nd earliest) at Coralville Res. (THK) were the first fall birds. 265 at Colo Ponds on 31 Jul (HZ) was the only large concentration reported.

Stilt Sandpiper: 1 at Coralville Res. on 6 Jun (THK) was the last spring bird [2nd latest]. 10 at Coralville Res. (THK) and 1 in Warren Co. (AJ), both on 14 Jul, were the first fall birds.

Short-billed Dowitcher: 10 at Coralville Res. (THK, details) and 1 in N Warren Co. (AJ, details), both on 14 Jul were the first reported.

Common Snipe: 1 in Warren Co. on 14 Jul (AJ) was early [2nd earliest] if it was a migrant. This species is a rare nester in Iowa.

American Woodcock: 1 at Coralville Res. on 2 Jun (THK) and 6 or 7 at Big Sand Mound Preserve, Muscatine Co. in June (T. Brush fide PCP) were the only reports.

Wilson's Phalarope: A pair plus a male near Thornton, Cerro Gordo Co. in June and early July (L. Hemesath fide JJD) and a pair at Colo Ponds on 14 Jun (HZ) are suggestive of breeding. 2 in NE Warren Co. on 21 Jul (AJ), 1 at the IPL Ponds on 24 Jul (BP), and 1 at Colo Ponds on 26, 29 Jul (HZ) were probably migrants.

Franklin's Gull: 1-10 were reported from 3-10 June in Cerro Gordo, Humboldt, Mills, Polk, Sac, and Wright counties.

Bonaparte's Gull: A juvenile at Saylorville Res. on 25 Jul (SJD) is one of the few recent summer records.

Ring-billed Gull: Reported from Buena Vista, Johnson, Marion, Palo Alto, Polk, Pottawattamie, Sac, Story, and Worth counties. 115 at Coralville Res. on 2 Jun (THK) was the last big spring group while 125 at Red Rock Res. on 24 Jul (AJ) was the most reported for fall birds. At least 45 summered at Saylorville Res. (BE).

Herring Gull: A 2nd-year bird at Smith L., Kossuth Co. on 13 Jul (MCK) was the only report.

Caspian Tern: 1-9 were reported from Cerro Gordo, Clinton, Johnson, Kossuth, Marion, Polk, Pottawattamie, and Scott counties.

Common Tern: 5 at Pony Creek L., Mills Co. on 3 Jun [DLR, 3rd latest] and 1 at Red Rock Res. on 16 Jul (AJ, details) were the only reports.

Forster's Tern: Reported from throughout the state and the period but no one mentioned evidence of nesting.

Least Tern: None were reported at IPL Ponds this summer. 2 at Badger Creek L., Madison Co. (EIA, EuA, details), 1 at Little Wall L. on 6 Jun (BEh, details), 1 at Colo Ponds on 13 Jun (HZ, details), and 3 at Lizard L. on 12 Jul (BEh, details) were the only reports.

Black Tern: Other than 12 at Union Slough N.W.R. on 13 Jun (MCK), all reports were from July and probably were migrants. 40 at Red Rock Res. in mid Jul (AJ) was the most reported. Most disturbing was the report of 40 found dead at L. Icaria, Adams Co. on 20 May, apparently from exposure to a pesticide (fide Iowa DNR).

Ringed Turtle-Dove: 1 was seen in Mitchell Co. on 27 Jul (CN).

Black-billed Cuckoo: Kenne (near Algona) and Rose (in SW Iowa) found the species fairly common. An adult was attending a nest at Sny Magill Access, Clayton Co. on 11 Jul (DC) but few others mentioned this species.

Yellow-billed Cuckoo: Kenne said this species was more abundant than the previous one while Rose said the opposite. There were few other reports.

Eastern Screech-Owl: A brood was found near Plymouth, Cerro Gordo Co. (CN).

Short-eared Owl: 1 in Van Buren Co. on 16 Jun (AJ) may have been nesting.

Chuck-will's-widow: 3 were heard at the usual site in Fremont Co. on 12 Jul (BPr, MPr), and 2 nests were found at Big Sand Mound Preserve, Muscatine Co. in June (T. Brush fide PCP). The latter are the second and third nests found in Iowa.

Ruby-throated Hummingbird: 2 juveniles were in N Warren Co. on 14 Jul (AJ).

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker: A nest with young was found sw. of New Albin, Allamakee Co. on 12 Jun (JLH), and adults were at a nest hole at Effigy Mounds on 1 Jun. Sapsuckers were present all summer along the Des Moines R. n. of Algona (MCK).

Pileated Woodpecker: 1 s. of Algona on 21 Jul (MCK) was at the edge of the species' range and almost ended up as a road kill for Kenne.

Olive-sided Flycatcher: Singles at Hickory Hill P., Iowa City on 2 Jun (THK), Ledges S.P. on 6 Jun (MPr), and Saylorville Res. on 6 Jun (MPr) are typical of late migrants.

Yellow-bellied Flycatcher: 1 at Hickory Hill P., Iowa City on 2 Jun (THK) was the only report.

Acadian Flycatcher: A nest was found at Effigy Mounds N.M. on 11 Jun (DC); other reports came from Lee and Van Buren counties.

Alder Flycatcher: There the usual late migrants; 1 in N Warren Co. on 9 Jun (AJ) was the latest.

Willow Flycatcher: 1-4 reported from Audubon, Black Hawk, Clayton, Guthrie, Howard, Johnson, Marion, Mills, Polk, Story and Winneshiek counties. A nest was found in Mills Co. in July (DLR).

Least Flycatcher: 3 at Sny Magill Access, Clayton Co. on 6 Jun (DC) and 1 near Woodbine, Harrison Co. on 14 Jul (DLR) were the only reports.

Western Kingbird: Rose reported them common in the usual Fremont to Monona line of counties in western Iowa. Reports from outside that area were 1 near Perry on 9 Jun (DDM) and 1 near Rippey on 4 Jun and 15 Jul (SRL).

Horned Lark: Petersen noted an increase on BBS counts in Clinton and Cedar counties.

Purple Martin: Only Mosman commented: he had 102 nests, the most ever but poor nest success with about 300 young produced. I thought the species was scarce this year.

Tree Swallow: 700 were found in Johnson Co. on 29 Jul (AJ).

Cliff Swallow: 450 were seen at Oak L. near Algona on 29 Jul (MCK).

Brown Creeper: 1 at Credit Island on 2 Jun (PCP), 2 at Huron Island, Des Moines Co. on 12 Jun (PCP), and 1 in June and July at Princeton M. (T. Brush fide PCP) were all along the Mississippi R. where this species is most likely to be found nesting.

Carolina Wren: The comeback of this species continues. Besides reports from Clinton, Des Moines, Fremont, Johnson, Mills, Muscatine, and Scott counties where the species is expected, the following were outside its normal range: near Rippey in Boone Co. on 9 and 10 Jul (SRL), near Castana, Monona Co. on 14 Jul (DLR), and s. of Algona on 29 Jul (MCK).

Bewick's Wren: 1 or 2 were seen by numerous individuals near Argyle, Lee Co. from 11-21 Jun (RCe-details, AJ-details, BPr, MPr-details, JF*).

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher: 3 pairs near Irvington, Kossuth Co. on 1 Jul (MCK) is near the edge of this species' range in NC Iowa.

Eastern Bluebird: Mosman said it was a poor year with nests down 25%.

Veery: The only reports were from Boone and Kossuth counties. Is this species becoming rare in Iowa?

Wood Thrush: 1-9 were reported from Allamakee, Cerro Gordo, Jasper, Johnson, Kossuth, Lee, Mills, Monona, Polk, Story, Tama, and Van Buren counties.

Northern Mockingbird: 1-4 were reported from Johnson (2 sites), Monona, Muscatine (2 sites), Page (2 sites), Van Buren and Warren counties, somewhat fewer than usual.

Northern Shrike: A report will be referred to the Records Committee.

Loggerhead Shrike: This species seems to be increasing, at least if the reports I receive are indicative. I had reports from Boone, Cass, Clinton, Jasper, Jefferson (brood), Johnson, Louisa, Madison, Marion (brood), Marshall (brood, 2 nests), Palo Alto, Pottawattamie, Story (2 broods), Van Buren, Wapello, Worth, and Wright (brood) counties.

White-eyed Vireo: The only reports were 1 at Shimek F., Lee Co. on 19 Jun (MPr, BPr) and 2 at Red Cedar W.A., Muscatine Co. on 7 Jul (PCP).

Bell's Vireo: 1-5 were reported in Fremont, Jefferson, Marion, Mills, Polk, Pottawattamie, Story, Van Buren, and Warren counties. 1 at Dog Creek P., O'Brien Co. on 3 Jul (JLH) and 1 at Big Marsh W.A., Butler Co. on 24 Jul (JLH) were out of the species' usual range.

Yellow-throated Vireo: 1 or 2 were reported in Boone, Kossuth, Mills, Monona, Polk, and Wright counties.

Blue-winged Warbler: The only reports were from Shimek F. (AJ, MPr).

Tennessee Warbler: 1 on 1 Jun in N Warren Co. (AJ) was the only report.

Northern Parula: 1-6 were reported from the usual sites in Boone, Fremont, Lee, and Van Buren counties.

Chestnut-sided Warbler: 1 was at Holst F., Boone Co. on 6, 8 Jun (BPr, MPr), the same site where one has been seen yearly since 1987.

Black-throated Blue Warbler: A male seen well at Waubonsie S.P. on 26 Jul (BLW) is Iowa's first summer record [record early].

Yellow-throated Warbler: 1-4 were reported at the usual Des Moines R. valley sites in Boone, Lee, and Polk counties.

Cerulean Warbler: 1-10 were reported in the usual Allamakee, Lee, and Polk county sites. 1 n. of Lock and Dam 13, Clinton Co. on 9 Jun (PCP) and 1 at Pine Lake S.P., Hardin Co. on 13 Jun (MPr) were at new sites.

Black-and-white Warbler: 1 or 2 males were found at Waubonsie S.P., Fremont Co. from 4 Jun-13 Jul (BPa, LPa), 1 was nw. of Glenwood, Mills Co. on 24 Jun, 14 Jul (DLR), and 1 was at Willow Lake P., Harrison Co. on 14 Jul (DLR), all in SW Iowa. Is this species a rare nester in that area?

American Redstart: 3 males in NE Lee Co. on 15 Jul was a first for that area for Cecil.

- Prothonotary Warbler:** Petersen found only 1 pair at Big Sand Mound Preserve, a big drop from normal years. Kenne found a pair n. of Algona on 8 Jul and 1 bird south of that site on 14 Jul. This is north of their usual range while 1 at Pony Creek Park, Mills Co. on 21 Jun (DLR) is one of the few recent SW Iowa records.
- Worm-eating Warbler:** 1 in Shimek F. near Argyle, Lee Co. on 16 Jun (AJ) and 2 adults feeding a young bird at the same area on 21 Jul (JF) were the only reports.
- Ovenbird:** 8 at each of two Effigy Mounds N.M. sites (DC), 1 ne. of Onawa, Monona Co. on 4 Jul (DLR), 5 at Saylorville Res. on 30 Jun (BE), and 1 at Call S.P., Kossuth Co. (MCK) were the only reports. The species is probably unreported by most observers.
- Northern Waterthrush:** 1 was in Algona on 1 Jun (MCK, details) [ties record late date].
- Louisiana Waterthrush:** 1 or 2 were reported from the usual sites in Allamakee, Boone, Lee, Polk, and Van Buren counties.
- Kentucky Warbler:** 1-4 were reported from the usual sites in Allamakee, Boone, Lee, Mills, Muscatine, and Van Buren counties. A family group with several fledglings was in Shimek F. near Argyle on 16 Jun (AJ).
- Hooded Warbler:** 1 at Shimek F. on 10 Jul (MPr) was the only report.
- Yellow-breasted Chat:** 1 or 2 were reported from the usual sites in Des Moines, Lee, Muscatine, Polk, and Warren counties.
- Summer Tanager:** A nest was found at Lamb's Grove, Jasper Co. on 14 Jul (GJB); 1 or 2 were reported from Lee, Mills, Muscatine, and Van Buren counties.
- Scarlet Tanager:** Singles were reported in Boone, Lee, Monona, and Polk counties.
- Blue Grosbeak:** 1 or 2 were widely reported along the Fremont to Lyon line of counties in W Iowa. Outside of there, singles were found near Dog Creek P., O'Brien Co. and in SE O'Brien Co., both on 3 July (JLH) and e. of Denison on 26 Jul (EIA, EuA). 1 near the Turkey River Access in Lee Co. on 21 Jun (JF) was the only report from SE Iowa.
- Green-tailed Towhee:** 1 was seen well and photographed at a feeder in West Des Moines from 22 May to early Jun (CQ). This is the second Iowa record of this western species.
- Clay-colored Sparrow:** 1 w. of Wesley, Kossuth Co. on 21, 24 Jun (MCK) was the only report.
- Vesper Sparrow:** Petersen noted a great increase in this species' numbers on BBS counts in Cedar and Clinton counties.
- Lark Sparrow:** 1-5 were reported from Boone, Jefferson, Lee, O'Brien, Polk, Story, and Warren counties.
- Henslow's Sparrow:** 2 were reported w. of Keosauqua, Van Buren Co. on 16 Jun (AJ) and 10 Jul (MPr), a new site for the species.
- Swamp Sparrow:** Several family groups were found at Iowa L., Kossuth Co. on 19 Jun (MCK).
- White-throated Sparrow:** 1 was heard and tape-recorded in West Des Moines on 6, 7 Jun (PA, ReA).
- Eastern Meadowlark:** Petersen noted a big increase on a BBS route in Clinton Co. while Johnson thought the species was increasing in SC Iowa.
- Western Meadowlark:** Petersen noted increases on BBS routes in Cedar and Clinton counties.
- Yellow-headed Blackbird:** Improved water conditions apparently triggered a rash of reports from sites where the species is not usually found. These include Keg L., Mills Co. (TB, DLR), w. of Lamoni (JDG), Swan L., Johnson Co. (THK), w. of Liscomb (MPr), Brenton's Sl. and Big Creek W. A., Polk Co. (AJ), SE Polk Co. (RCe, SJS), Princeton M. (PCP), Colo Ponds (HZ), several small ponds ne. of Ames (HZ, JJD), and near Rippey (SRL).
- Great-tailed Grackle:** None were reported.
- Orchard Oriole:** 1-8 were reported from Cedar, Cerro Gordo (several broods), Clinton, Fremont, Kossuth (several broods), Lyon, Marion, Plymouth, Polk, Story, Tama, and Van Buren counties, about typical for a summer.
- Purple Finch:** A female was seen in Iowa City on 10 Jul (SJS*) for the first recent summer record.
- House Finch:** Nesting was noted in Cass, Jefferson, Montgomery, Page, Polk, and Warren (out in the country-AJ) counties. Petersen reported triple broods and estimated there were 2,000 in the Davenport area. There has been a tremendous increase in Ames over last year (JJD).
- Red Crossbill:** Amazingly, there were three reports: 3 at Algona on 7-9 Jul (MCK, details), 1 at Rippey on 16 Jul (SRL), and 1 in Carroll on 29-31 Jul (*SSc, photo). There are only 4 other summer reports in the past decade.

Pine Siskin: 1-3 were seen at a feeder in West Des Moines until 24 Jul (KGr, PA, ReA, photo), and several remained in Cedar Rapids until mid July (Rich Patterson fide JJD). The birds that were common in some areas this spring seemed to disappear about mid May.

CONTRIBUTORS-SUMMER 1990

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CHUCK-WILL'S-WIDOW NESTING IN EASTERN IOWA

TIM BRUSH

During the summers of 1988, 1989, and 1990, I have regularly heard one or two Chuck-will's-widows calling at Big Sand Mound Preserve in extreme northeastern Louisa County. The birds were heard between 04:45 and 05:45 CDT, usually in the floodplain forest between Beatty's Pond and the edge of the sand prairie. On the morning of 10 June 1990, I discovered a Chuck-will's-widow nest by flushing an adult from its nest.



The nest was a very shallow depression in leaf litter and contained two eggs. The nest was in a small hollow with scattered pin oaks and river birches, and was within 10 meters of the edge of the prairie. There were few shrubs in the hollow, so that the understory was open. The eggs were chalky white and covered with spots but were conspicuous when the adult was not covering them. The adult flew near the nest briefly before leaving the area. Two hours later, one egg had been moved to a nearby location. Chuck-will's-widows have long been known to move their eggs if their nest is disturbed (Bent 1940). I found no eggs or young from this nest on later visits.

I found a second nest on 20 June 1990, about 200 meters south of the first nest. An adult flushed off one egg on leaf litter in an open stand of river birch. This nest was 25 meters from the prairie edge in a nearly flat area. Two eggs were present from 25 June through 4 July, but no eggs or young were present on 13 July. The nest

may have been successful, as adult Common Nighthawks are known to move their young immediately after hatching (P. C. Petersen, personal communication). The young should have hatched by about 13 July, based on an incubation period of about three weeks.

Both nests were in the area frequented by one of the two calling Chuck-will's-widows at Big Sand Mound. No nests were located in the territory of the other bird, despite several searches.

These two nests, at 41 degrees 19.5 minutes north latitude, are the northernmost nests of Chuck-will's-widows in Iowa and perhaps the northernmost for the species. The other Chuck-will's-widow nest found in Iowa was in southeastern Wapello County (Ayres and Ayres 1970). Birds have also been seen or heard as far north as Dubuque in Iowa and also in Wisconsin (e.g., Schaufenbuel 1987) and Minnesota (Janssen 1987). How long the birds have been at Big Sand Mound is unknown since the area was not worked intensively before 1988. My thanks to Pete Petersen for his comments. Brian, Corey, and Louis Blevins and Gerry White assisted in the search that resulted in the discovery of the first nest.

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